

Working for OUR community

Bill Finch

Aid for Towns in the 22nd Senate District

The beginning of our state's economic recovery has already had a positive impact on our state budget. This year, we ended up with a small surplus and the General Assembly has decided to invest much of the additional money into aid to municipalities to help pay for local schools and to hold down property taxes.

Pequot & Mohegan Revenue Sharing	\$9,965,859
Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)	\$9,383,886
Town Aid Road Fund (TAR)	\$688,848
Total Education Grants	\$168,507,699
Local Capital Improvement Projects	\$2,585,555
Total	\$191,131,848

*This funding
represents an
increase of
\$3,196,693 over
last year's total.*

RELIEVING TRAFFIC CONGESTION



- The state has provided funds to implement a container barge feeder service between Bridgeport and New York, a program that could remove as many as 30,000 trucks per year from Interstate 95 and surrounding roadways.
- The legislature continued our commitment to ease congestion by authorizing \$25 million to purchase 38 new rail cars for the Metro-North fleet.

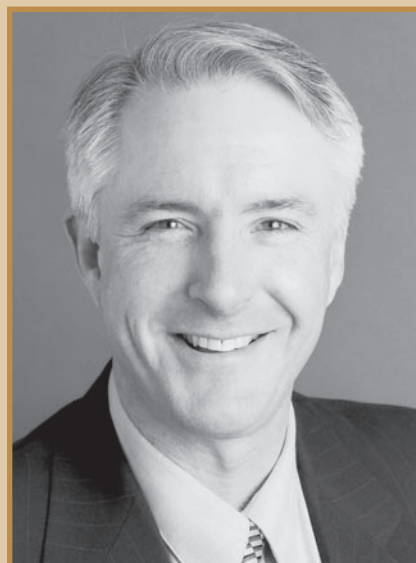
PROVIDING QUALITY EDUCATION

Area students will soon benefit from the state's efforts to redesign and improve Housatonic Community College. The state has allocated over \$5 million to renovate the former Sears building and several other buildings. The Sears building will be used for a bookstore, cafeteria, conference rooms and classrooms.



I am always happy to meet students from my district when they visit the State Capitol and share my experiences with them, as I did with this group from Hillcrest Middle School in Trumbull.

SUMMER 2004



Dear Friend:

This has been a legislative session like no other. Despite the controversy surrounding former Governor Rowland, we were able to pass important legislation to keep Connecticut a great place to live and work.

I fought hard for legislation which provided property tax relief for overburdened taxpayers by increasing the property tax credit on your state income tax; increased state support for schools; and made major strides in protecting our air and water.

I hope you find this newsletter informative. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

Bill Finch
Bill Finch
State Senator, 22nd District

SUBSCRIBE TO THE FINCH REPORT

Do you want to receive regular e-mail updates on issues that are important to our district, current legislation, helpful state programs, events you may be interested in attending, and lots more? Sign up for my new e-newsletter, the *Finch Report*! Just follow the instructions below and I'll add you to my list.

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From your State Senator

Bill FINCH

Legislative Office Building, Room 2400, Hartford, CT 06106-1597

Capitol Phone 1-800-842-1420

E-mail Finch@senatedems.state.ct.us

Web www.SenatorFinch.com



I'm proud
to represent the
22nd Senatorial
district which
includes the
communities
of Bridgeport,
Monroe and
Trumbull

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STATE SENATOR

BILL FINCH

*Continuing to Work
for Connecticut's Future*



Child restraint systems were on display at the Capitol this spring. Robert Cordes of Safe Kids Connecticut holds a booster seat with Senator Finch.



In April, my colleagues and I honored the members of both 2004 national champion UConn Husky teams and their coaches (including Jim Calhoun, above) at the State Capitol.

SAFER ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION LINES

There are plans to build and replace electric transmission lines and they must be constructed in a safe manner making people's health and safety a priority. That is why we passed legislation that will strengthen our laws regulating what is required in an application to build these lines.

RESTORING TRUST IN GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Given the scandal and admitted misconduct of former Governor Rowland, it was clear legislation was needed to restore the public's trust in government. I was proud to co-sponsor legislation that makes the Ethics Commission much stronger by increasing its membership and protecting its funding. The Ethics Commission is designed to prevent and investigate corruption and unethical conduct, and this bill finally gives it the protection and freedom to do its job that it has long deserved.

We also approved legislation that stiffens the penalties against those who violate the state's ethics code. The bill increases the statute of limitations for ethics violations, increases the civil penalties for such violations and doubles the time that the state has to bring an action to void certain contracts that were the result of corruption. These are essential measures to restoring the public trust.

ENERGY INDEPENDENCE & PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

Gas prices are soaring, and as consumers work to conserve to save money, the legislature also acted to spur the development of new technology to make future cars more fuel efficient and safer for the environment. This session we passed new laws that:

- Reduce air emissions from new cars and trucks to help reduce air pollution
- Establish regional greenhouse gas emission reduction goals and require the state to develop a plan to meet them
- Encourage the use of fuel efficient vehicles by extending the sales tax exemptions for alternative fuel vehicles and for certain hybrid vehicles

DRUNK DRIVERS & UNDERAGE DRINKING

Two important initiatives were passed by the General Assembly in our ongoing effort to protect Connecticut residents from the dangers of alcohol abuse. The first provides the Department of Motor Vehicles greater ability to revoke immediately the driving privileges of certain individuals who are arrested for drunk driving. The second new law discourages minors from fraudulently purchasing alcohol by allowing merchants to photocopy suspicious identification.

WORKING TO KEEP KIDS SAFE WITH BOOSTER SEATS

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, every 90 seconds a child is killed or injured in a motor vehicle in this country. Often children who are age 4 are too big for car seats, but not big enough to use safety belts designed for adults. That's why this year I introduced legislation that passed in the state Senate requiring that children up to age 6 or weighing less than 60 pounds, regardless of age, be secured in a child restraint system approved by the Department of Motor Vehicles. Additionally, the bill would have required passengers of any age to be restrained in a safety belt. The measure also would have mandated that a child under age 1 or weighing less than 20 pounds be transported only in a rear-facing approved child restraint system. Unfortunately, this measure did not pass both houses and did not become law.

HONORING FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED

Connecticut native Frederick Law Olmsted, considered the founder of American landscape architecture, contributed greatly to Connecticut's urban parks, including Hartford's park system and Beardsley Park in Bridgeport. Perhaps his most recognized work is Central Park in New York. In an effort to honor his important legacy, the Senate passed legislation which I proposed that would establish April 26th of each year as Frederick Law Olmsted Day. Unfortunately, this measure did not become law this year. I have been working with a strong coalition to honor Olmsted and we will continue our efforts.

Who Wants to Change the World?



I'm proud to announce the winners of the 2004 "Who Wants to Change the World" essay contest. The contest is designed to give high school students hands-on experience with the legislative process and get them excited about civic involvement and the potential to make a positive change.

Winners had their bills submitted by me as proposed legislation. Students participate in the legislative process by testifying on behalf of their bills at public hearings. Contest winners and their classmates learn first hand how a bill becomes a law as they work, in coordination with my office, to move their bills forward.



Central High School

WINNER: Ashley Rucker
(center) for *Alcohol and Drug
Prevention Course in High
School to get a Drivers License*



Trumbull High School

Winner: Lauren Wessler
(center) for *Delayed
High School Start Time
for Improved Academic
Performance*



Masuk High School

WINNER: Andrew Dow
(left center) for *Tax Incentives
for Renewable Energy Use by
Businesses and Homes*